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Africa Partnership Station: Coastal Geomorphology and Hazards Planning

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LONG-TERM GOALS

This research aims to develop the coastal management and research capabilities of Gulf of Guinea nations to increase the ability to predict and mitigate coastal hazards. The anticipated means to do so is through sponsoring and developing the coastal processes research capabilities of these nations and their university systems.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of these activities research is to provide guidance to the nascent coastal processes research program at the University of Ghana. Development of this program is anticipated to aid maritime governance capabilities and social stability within Ghana. Over the short term, the goal is to assess the local coastal hazards and their causes. These efforts will be supplemented by ongoing monitoring of coastal change. Development of these technological capabilities (terrestrial surveying, bathymetric surveying, wave computation, coastal change modeling, GIS skills) is intended to lead to a self-sustaining research group at the University of Ghana that can then independently pursue other research questions and seek other party funding, either locally or internationally. These future activities hopefully will include collaboration between project PI's and the University of Ghana.

APPROACH

This project consists of advising and consulting activities, focused around a week-long workshop to occur at the University of Ghana in late February/early March, 2009. All work funded by ONR through this grant is to be conducted by the PI, Andrew Ashton. The workshop will include seminars on geologic coastal processes, field visits to assess coastal landforms and associated hazards, and focused demonstration field investigations. The field trip will be comprised of surveying and geophysical investigations using ground-penetrating radar. These activities will be centered on the development of future research collaborations to better understand the processes reshaping the Ghana coast, which in many cases threaten coastal infrastructure and communities.

WORK COMPLETED

During FY'08, PI Andrew Ashton participated in planning activities that included familiarizing himself with Ghana's coastal issues through contacts with members of the University of Ghana and literature searches of previous research in the area and identified coastal hazards. Ashton also

participated in the ‘Africa Partnership Station 2009 Mid-Planning Conference’, held in Arlington, Virginia on September 10-12. He was familiarized with the objectives and schedule of the upcoming Africa Partnership Station deployment and developed the workshop plan with Maritime Partner Liaison Augustus Vogel, US Naval Forces Europe and Africa.

RESULTS

As only planning activities occurred during this fiscal year, there are limited technical results. However, PI Ashton became familiar with the project, assisting with and consulting on the long-term (several year) conceptual development of a coastal research program at the University of Ghana. Additional planning centered on the upcoming workshop in Ghana.

IMPACT/APPLICATIONS

This project addresses the overarching goal of improving maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, and specifically in Ghana. A short-term impact will be assessment of coastal hazards along the Ghana coast and development of a research plan to increase coastal safety through hazard identification and mitigation. This hopefully will lead to the development of scientific relationships between the PI and African coastal researchers. Over the long term, the objective is to develop the independent research capabilities of the University of Ghana to improve the national capabilities in coastal hazards management and eventually maritime and fisheries management.

RELATED PROJECTS

None.